

Autism and Social Communication Team

Sleep is an important part of everyone's lives, and we know that difficulties with sleep can make managing daily activities more difficult. This might include feeling more stressed, anxious, angry, or unable to complete tasks. In families, if one person is struggling to sleep this can affect the whole family.

Neurodiverse children often have trouble sleeping. This might include:

- Reluctance to go to bed
- Difficulty going to sleep
- Not wanting to sleep alone
- Waking up during the night
- Waking up early
- And lots more...

A restful environment that is conducive to sleep can make all the difference when addressing your child's sleep needs. It is important that this environment is made to suit your child. We will all fall to sleep more easily when we are comfortable and relaxed. Here are some top tips to help create a restful environment for your child.

DIMMING THE LIGHTS

Doing this about an hour before sleep will help regulate your child's body and tell their brain it's time to move into sleep mode. Choose suitable curtains to darken the environment. Black out blinds can be particularly helpful in the summer months.



RELAXED AND PEACEFUL SLEEP ENVIRONMENT



Use calm colours such as neutral and pastel colours that do not stimulate your child. Freshly laundered bedding can also be helpful. A clean uncluttered room with toys covered away to "put the day to bed."

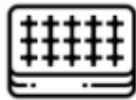
A COOL ROOM

Keep the bed away from windows, draughts and radiators. The temperature should be around 16—20°C according to the 'Lullaby Trust'. This is the safest room temperature.



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CHOOSE MATTRESS, PILLOWS AND BEDDING



It is important that your child is comfortable and safe in the best sleeping position for them with the correct aids. Mattress should be changed with significant growth periods.

THE RIGHT NOISE

Try to reduce noise inside and outside your house. A fan can create a consistent and soothing noise throughout the whole night whilst sleeping. TV's are best kept off due to the changing tones and volumes that will interrupt sleep.



SCENTS



Scents can be used to relax your child and can be comforting. Lavender can help reduce heart rate and blood pressure which will aid sleep. The reassurance of a parent's scent can help aid self-settling.

For further support, advice and information please call our helpline Monday to Thursday 1pm to 4pm (Term time) on 0114 2506800.

Or check out the following websites for more useful information....

- <https://cerebra.org.uk/get-advice-support/sleep-advice-service/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/health/sleep-problems-in-young-children/>
- <https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/child-development-and-neurodisability/autism-home/autism-support/sleep>

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Social Story

Getting a good night's sleep

	<p>Sleep is very important. It lets your body and mind rest after a busy day.</p>
	<p>Everyone has trouble sleeping sometimes. There are things you can do to help you sleep better.</p>
	<p>Think about what you eat and drink in the afternoons and evenings. Cola drinks have something in them to keep you awake.</p>
	<p>Try not to eat too much before bedtime. Have a least an hour after dinner to let your food go down.</p>
	<p>Try to get some fresh air each day. You don't have to do a sport every day. Just going outside is good.</p>
	<p>Try not to have where you sleep too hot or too cold.</p>
	<p>Put a nightlight on if you like to have some light or dark curtains if you don't.</p>
	<p>Try to go to bed at the same time each day. This should be the same at weekends as well as on school nights.</p>
	<p>Have a warm bath or shower before bed to relax you. You could also have a milky drink as this could help you sleep.</p>
	<p>Don't watch the television or use your phone or tablet before bed. The light they give off can wake up your brain.</p>
	<p>Remember to go to the toilet before you go to bed.</p>